

## **AMHERST COUNCIL ON AGING MINUTES**

### **May 1, 2008**

**Members Present:** Daniel Clapp, Elsie Fetterman, Joan Golowich, Joel Gordon, Rosemary Kofler, Barbara Sutherland, David Yaukey

**Absent:** Doris Holden

**Select Board Liaison, Gerry Weiss:** absent

**Staff Present:** Nancy Pagano (Director/Program Director), Maura Plante (Assistant Director/Services), Karen Erman (Administrative Assistant), Giovanna Mix (Administrative Assistant for Programs)

**Guests:** Sondra Lapollo (Director of Chicopee COA), Marge Babb, Lillian Scott

#### **Welcome:**

Barbara Sutherland, Chair, called the Council on Aging meeting to order at 9:06 AM. She acknowledged the guests and invited comments. There were none.

#### **Minutes of Previous Meeting:**

The minutes of the March 6, 2008 meeting were approved and accepted unanimously.

#### **Friends of Amherst Senior Center Treasurer's Report:**

In her absence, Doris provided a handout showing deposits of \$340.00, a payment of \$1000 for the Wellness Grant, and a balance of \$4,468.10 in the checking account. The report was approved and accepted unanimously.

### **CONTINUING BUSINESS**

#### **How Chicopee Undertook its Survey:**

**Sondra Lapollo**, Chicopee COA Director, gave a report. The Chicopee survey was a partnership with the COA, VNA, Housing Authority, Hawthorne Services (a local elder mental health agency) and the Office of Community Development.

There were 3 parts to the process:

**1.** They contracted with the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to have a demographic analysis done based on the 2000 census. That provided valuable information on elders by neighborhood and the many languages spoken. It gave them a picture of the **typical Chicopee elder – a 76 year-old single female living on less than \$20,000/year**. Chicopee is a poor community.

They also contracted with an outside consultant in order to get unbiased data.

**2.** The consultants interviewed major providers in the city - the Director of Elder Care, the Police Chief, the Fire Chief, and others.

Sessions were held with 3 focus groups - Caregivers, Older Adults and Baby Boomers. Elms College assisted.

An Interim Report was presented to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Demographic information and Provider information.

**3.** A random survey was mailed to 2 groups – the Baby boomer population and elder population – with questions about income, living status, health, health insurance, mental health, disability, economics (what they could afford), what they liked about Chicopee, language, and others. It very time intensive.

One result: 25% of both groups reported feelings of recent depression. The survey was anonymous.

Chicopee had a budget of \$28,000, funded by community block grant money, local businesses, banks and provider donations. The survey took about 3 years.

Sondra is willing to share information when Amherst does its survey. She recommended working with UConn Center on Aging in Farmington to do the survey.

Nancy pointed out that Amherst is a mini-entitlement community. It has fewer low-income people than Chicopee and therefore would not be entitled to as much grant money.

**David and Joel volunteered to work on a Survey Sub-Committee.**

#### **40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Plans:**

**Rosemary** reported that the sub-committee has met twice. It was decided to have an evening dinner celebration at the Bangs Center on Sunday, October 19. A cocktail hour from 5-6PM would be followed by a nice sit-down dinner. We have asked Frank and Nancy Lattuca to cater. A program of speakers would follow. Special people from the past would be invited guests. Ideas for entertainment included a continuous slide show of historic slides and background piano music by Bob Ackerman. The Gazette insert (Jenny Pellitier, contact person) was another topic discussed. Last month the COA approved spending \$1500 to cover the cost. The Gazette needs a list of vendors and the assurance of \$4000 in advertising before they will agree to do an insert. Nancy and Karen have been compiling the list.

**Nancy** met with the Friends Group on April 30. They suggested publishing our own booklet instead of having a Gazette insert. Thereby, the Senior Center could reap the profits from the advertisers and the cost may be less. Another concern is that readers often ignore the Gazette inserts. The main goal is to have a memento with a lot of information about the Senior Center.

**Karen** pointed out that it is very difficult to get ads from merchants if we were to do the booklet ourselves.

**Dan** expressed that the Gazette insert would probably be a more professional publication and has wider distribution of our information.

#### **Volunteer Awards Recognition:**

**Nancy** announced that the Awards Day will be held June 24 at 2 PM. Jean Schoen and Tom McAuley will receive the Evelyn Sears Awards, as approved by the COA last month. The program will include a speaker on laughter. Larry Shaffer, Ellen Story and Stan Rosenberg will be invited.

### **STAFF REPORTS**

#### **Budget Update:**

**Nancy** said our budget passed at Town Meeting last night. Gordon Freed spoke about the Senior Center budget, asking: *is the Senior Center prepared to deal with the needs of the growing number of seniors in Amherst? The number of young people in the schools in our community is diminishing while the senior population is growing.*

Nancy reminded us of prioritizing our long-term goals based on 5 different scenarios, as we discussed last month. (Minutes, April 3, 2008). Larry warned that depending on the community dialogue, some programs and services, like the Senior Center, might have to be eliminated in the future. Nancy did invite Larry to attend our COA meeting today.

#### **Survival Center Visit:**

**Maura** and Nancy visited the Survival Center and met with Cheryl Zoll, Director. Although few elders use the Survival Center, Maura did make contact with 2 elders who will now seek further service at the Senior Center. Maura plans to visit the Survival Center every other week.

#### **Caregivers Support:**

**Maura** reported that the support group has been struggling to continue. Only 2 people usually attend regardless of the time of day or format. A PhD. student has conducted it. It was paid for by a grant from HVES. Sheri Weintrub, LSW, from our Counseling Center, is very experienced in facilitating groups. She would be interested in facilitating a caregivers support group if there were a minimum of 5 participants. Maura knows of 12 people who may be interested. She will contact them.

#### **Senior Health Services:**

**Nancy** announced the receipt of 2 grants - \$5,000 from Cooley Dickinson Hospital and \$1625 from the Amherst Club, which allows money for Outreach. Lisa White will be the nurse at the Wellness Clinic at the Ann Whalen House for the summer while the UMass students are away. The Outreach money will cover 2-3 hours/week. Lisa would like to develop a similar program at the Clark House.

In the future, a letter will be delivered with the lunch deliveries and MOW deliveries letting elders know that Lisa is available for home visits. Eventually an announcement will be made in the Senior Spirit.

In her absence, Lisa provided a handout documenting a summary of her Clinic /home visits for April. Lisa will also be giving 2 diabetes workshops in late spring. She has begun plans for an "Aging Together" support group.

### **SUB-COMMTTEE UPDATE**

#### **Highland Valley Elder Services:**

**Barbara** said there was no representative at the last HVES meeting.

#### **Comprehensive Plan:**

**Rosemary** reported that ACP, the consulting group, has returned the Master Plan. The Review Sub-Committee is going over each chapter and expects to be finished in 2-3 weeks. The CPC will then convene for approval of the text. Town Meeting members did receive the revised Executive Summary on April 28, 2008.

Nancy brought up the topic of a banner for the July 4 parade. Dan had previously suggested each COA member carry a big placard naming the different programs or services offered at the Senior Center.

**A motion was made, seconded and passed to have a Senior Center banner made.**

#### **Nominating Committee:**

**Dan** said that Stephanie O'Keeffe's position must to be filled. In June, Elsie's position will need to be filled. The COA needs a Vice Chair and the officers need to be contacted about maintaining their positions.

The COA meeting adjourned at 10:38 AM.

**The next meeting of the COA will be held on June 12, 2008 at 9 AM.**

Respectfully submitted,  
Rosemary Kofler, Secretary